

2018 DNREC's Delaware Coastal Cleanup drew 1,100-plus volunteers who collected 2.7 tons of trash

DOVER – The DNREC-sponsored 31st annual Delaware Coastal Cleanup held Sept. 22 drew 1,115 volunteers, who collected 2.7 tons of trash and recyclables from 42 sites along more than 68 miles of Delaware's waterways and coastline stretching from Wilmington to Fenwick Island. For the first time in its history, the cleanup was moved to a rain date, due to Hurricane Florence.

"Each year, Delaware's Coastal Cleanup helps make a difference for marine life and water quality – and it's the hundreds of dedicated volunteers, many of whom come back year after year, who make the Cleanup an annual environmental success story," said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. "This year, we would like to extend a special thanks to the volunteers who rearranged their calendars to join us a week later than usual."

This year, more than 21,547 pieces of food/beverage-related trash were picked up, including 3,509 food wrappers, 2,361 plastic beverage bottles, 1,203 beverage cans, 712 glass bottles and 2,882 paper, plastic and foam cups, plates and take-out containers. In a year when the numbers of most trash items were lower, the count of three plastic items increased: 2,738 straws, up from 1,898; 1,116 plastic lids, up from 993; and 7,026 plastic bottle caps, up from 4,636. Other notable items included 1,946 plastic bags, 32 tires, 235 shotgun shells, 8,885 cigarette butts and cigar tips, and 723 balloons.

Some of the more unusual items found during this year's cleanup were: a dishwasher, a message in a bottle from 2007, a knife in a sheath, mattress springs, scissors, contact lens case, power cord, charcoal grill, pirate hat, utility knife, car muffler, beach chair, bushel baskets, street sign, key card, glow stick, ink cartridge, pacifier, pith helmet, car console, golf club handle, metal canopy frame, and a wide variety of clothing and shoes including sneakers, flip flops, and jeweled sandals, as well as numerous balls and toys, including a troll doll, an Incredibles action figure, a Nintendo game controller, and a Rubik's Cube.

Delaware's next Coastal Cleanup is set for Saturday, Sept. 14, 2019. Registration will be posted [on DNREC's website](#) next July, with groups of 10 or more encouraged to pre-register beginning May 1 by calling 302-739-9902 or emailing Delaware Coastal Cleanup Coordinator Joanna Wilson at Joanna.wilson@delaware.gov.

DNREC organizes Delaware's Coastal Cleanup with co-sponsors including Edgewell Personal Care/Playtex Manufacturing Inc., which donates gloves; and Waste Management, which hauls trash and recyclables collected by volunteers. Delaware's event is part of the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup. The types and quantities of trash collected are recorded on data cards and forwarded to the Center for Marine Conservation, which compiles the information to help identify debris sources and focus efforts on elimination or reduction. For more information, please visit www.oceanconservancy.org.

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